



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Ouachita National Forest
Caddo-Womble Ranger District

1523 Highway 270 East
Mount Ida, AR 71957
870-867-2101
Fax: 870-867-3338

File Code: 1950; 2800

Date: September 12, 2018

Dear Interested Party:

This project announcement letter serves to initiate scoping, "an early and open process for determining the scope of issues to be addressed" (40 CFR 1501.7). I request your input on the following proposed action regarding the 2017 Quartz Nominations Project.

Proposed Action

The Forest Service proposes to allow quartz exploration and mining operations on four tracts of land consisting of 56 acres in the following locations of Montgomery County, Arkansas:

- 10 acres in Section 6, T2S R23W and Section 1, T2S R24W (OQC-275)
- 15 acres in Section 4, T2S R24W (OQC-277)
- 11 acres in Section 35, T1S R24W (OQC-280P)
- 20 acres in Section 7, T2S R24W (OQC-281P)

Timber impacted by mining operations would be sold using the most appropriate method of disposal. Reclamation would include topsoil reapplication, recontouring of the surrounding terrain, fertilizing and revegetating with site-specific seed mixture, and replanting with seedlings until adequately stocked. Access would be provided using a combination of existing National Forest System (NFS) roads, 0.3 miles of existing roads not in the NFS that will be added, and 0.1 miles of new construction to reach the mining areas. Approximately 0.5 miles of NFS road W41 would need to be gated and closed to the public for security of the site and equipment (see enclosed map with approximate locations).

Purpose of the Action

Overall guidance for the proposed project is found in the 2005 Revised Land and Resource Management Plan (Revised Forest Plan) for the Ouachita National Forest. The purpose of this action is to allow the extraction of quartz as required by 36 CFR 228C and FSM 2850 Supplement: R8-2800-2002-2. According to the Mining and Minerals Policy Act of 1970, it is the continuing policy of the federal government to foster and encourage private enterprises in the exploration, development and production of mineral and energy resources.

Need for the Action

The nomination fees for four separate tracts has been submitted to the Womble Ranger District, and the Forest Service must now determine whether quartz contracts should be issued for OQC-275 & OQC-277 through competitive sales and if Preference Right Prospecting Permits should be issued for OQC-280P & OQC-281P.



2017 Quartz Nominations Project

Invitation to Participate in Project Planning

Scoping is not limited to a single point in time; we will continue to accept and consider comments until an implementation decision is made. With that said, your comments will be most helpful if they are received early in the process. They will help us identify environmental issues associated with implementation, and alternative ways to meet Forest plan objectives and desired conditions. Your involvement will enable us to better assess concerns of the public.

Comments received in response to this solicitation, including names and addresses of those who comment, will become a part of the public record for this proposed action. Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered; however, anonymous comments will not provide the Agency with the ability to provide the respondent with subsequent environmental documents.

Objection Process

This project is subject to subparts A and B of *36 CFR Part 218 Project-Level Predecisional Administrative Review Process* (objection process); it is not authorized under the Healthy Forest Restoration Act (HFRA).

The designated opportunity for public comment in response to this solicitation is **September 12, 2018 to October 12, 2018**. Providing specific written comments during this time will afford you standing to later file an objection to the project, should you desire (see Upcoming Project Planning Steps).

Pursuant to §218.2, specific written comments should be within the scope of the proposed action, have a direct relationship to the proposed action, and must include supporting reasons for the responsible official to consider.

How to Comment

Specific written comments must be submitted to: Shalonda Guy, District Ranger, 1523 Hwy 270 E, Mt. Ida AR 71957 or fax to 870-867-3338. The office business hours for those submitting hand-delivered comments are: 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Send electronic comments, in a common digital format, to comments-southern-ouachita-caddo-womble@fs.fed.us. Please state "2017 Quartz Nominations Project" in the subject line when providing electronic comments, or on the envelope when replying by mail.

Upcoming Project Planning Steps

As stated above, your comments will help us identify issues and they will be used to formulate alternatives to this proposal. An environmental analysis will be conducted and the results will be documented in an environmental assessment (EA).

Upon completion, the EA will be released for public review and comment. A 30-day notice and comment period pursuant to 36 CFR 218 will be initiated. This comment period will afford you another opportunity to obtain standing to later file an objection to the project, should you desire.

An objection period, if required, will follow the regulation found in §218.7. Issues raised in objections must be based on previously submitted specific written comments regarding the project and attributed to the objector, unless the issue is based on new information that arose

2017 Quartz Nominations Project

after a designated opportunity to comment (§218.8(c)). If you have questions about this project or would like more information, please contact Andrew McCormick at 501-321-5285 or andrewtmccormick@fs.fed.us.

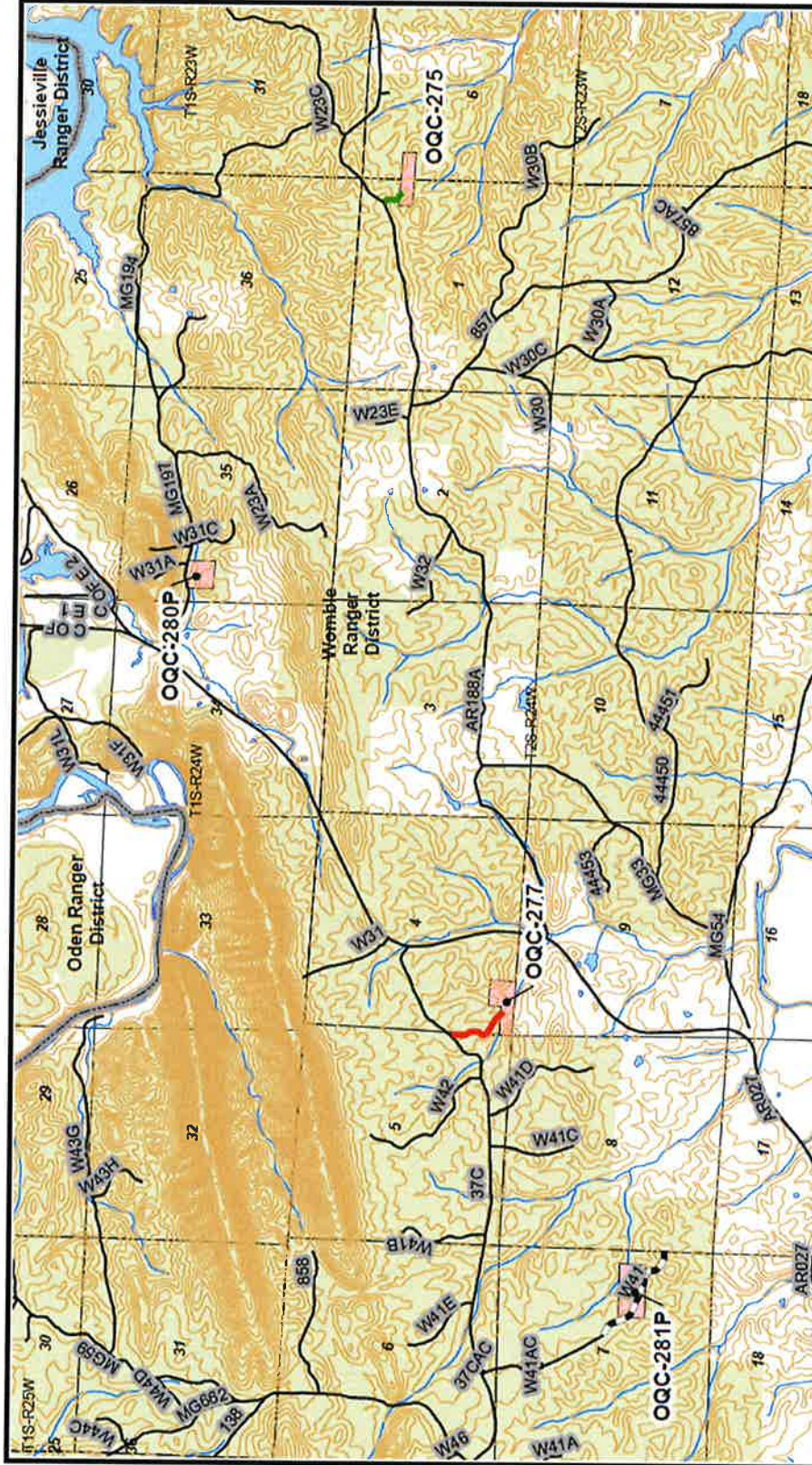
Sincerely,

Beth A. Christensen

BETH CHRISTENSEN

acting District Ranger

Enclosure



Vicinity Map



Sheet 1 of 1

The Forest Service uses the most current and complete data available to create this map. The map is not intended to be used for legal purposes. It is not a substitute for a deed or other legal document. The map is for informational purposes only. The Forest Service does not warrant the accuracy or completeness of the information on this map. The Forest Service is not responsible for any errors or omissions on this map. The Forest Service is not responsible for any damages or injuries resulting from the use of this map. The Forest Service is not responsible for any claims or lawsuits resulting from the use of this map. The Forest Service is not responsible for any claims or lawsuits resulting from the use of this map.

Legend

- Existing Road to add to NFS (closed)
- New Road to add to NFS (closed)
- Road Closure
- Road
- 2017 Quartz Nominations
- Streams
- National Forest System Lands



Map Creation Date - Aug. 2, 2018
Map Revision Date - Aug. 10, 2018

2017 Quartz Nominations

Proposed Quartz Mines and Access Routes

Caddo-Womble Ranger District
Montgomery County, Arkansas

U.S. Forest Service - R8
Ouachita National Forest

For more information, contact the Womble Ranger District at 1523 Hwy 270 E Mt. Ida, AR or phone (870) 867-2101

